

Allowable Subject Matter

1. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art does not teach or fairly suggest a communications method, the method comprising: operating a first communications device to: perform a decoding operation on a first signal including encoded signal information; determine if the encoded signal information included in the first signal was successfully, decoded; when it is determined that said encoded information was successfully decoded, generating an ACK signal having an ACK signal value; and when it is determined that said encoded information was not successfully decoded, generating a first NAK signal having one of a plurality of possible NAK signal values, each NAK signal value, in the plurality of NAK signal values, differing from any other one of the NAK signal values in said plurality by an amount which is less than the smallest amount any one of said NAK signal values differs from said ACK signal value, each of said plurality of possible NAK signal values corresponding to a different level of decoding success, as recited in independent claims 1, 12, 26, 30, 36, 39, 42, 43 and 44.

2. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

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Conclusion

3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Roberta A. Shand whose telephone number is (571)272-3161. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00am-5:30pm.

4. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, William Trost can be reached on 571-272-7872. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

5. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Roberta A. Shand
/R. A. S./
Examiner, Art Unit 2472

/William Trost/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2472